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*Agency of Transportation*

TO: Interested Parties  
FROM: Scott Robertson, Municipal Assistance Bureau – Local Projects Section  
DATE: August 12, 2015  
RE: **VTrans Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)**

VTrans is pleased to announce that we are now accepting applications for the Transportation Alternatives Program. This year, roughly 50% of the TAP funding is reserved for Environmental Mitigation projects relating to stormwater and highways. The Transportation Alternatives Program provides funding for the following eligible activities:

- (A) Construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other nonmotorized forms of transportation, including sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian and bicycle signals, lighting and other safety-related infrastructure, and transportation projects to achieve compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.).
- (B) Construction, planning, and design of infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers, including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities to access daily needs.
- (C) Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for trails for pedestrians, bicyclists, or other non-motorized transportation users.
- (D) Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas.
- (E) Community improvement activities, including--
  - (i) historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities;
  - (ii) vegetation management practices in transportation rights-of-way to improve roadway safety, prevent against invasive species, and provide erosion control; and
  - (iii) archaeological activities relating to impacts from implementation of a transportation project eligible under this title.
- (F) Any environmental mitigation activity, including pollution prevention and pollution abatement activities and mitigation to--
  - (i) address stormwater management, control, and water pollution prevention or abatement related to highway construction or due to highway runoff, including activities described in sections 133(b)(11), 328(a), and 329; or
  - (ii) reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality or to restore and maintain connectivity among terrestrial or aquatic habitats.
- (G) The Safe Routes to School Program under Section 1404 (SAFETEA-LU) (23 U.S.C. 402).

Construction of salt/sand sheds is potentially eligible under the environmental mitigation category. Eligibility for salt/sand sheds will be considered on a case by case basis based on proximity of the

existing storage location to a major water body (generally within 50 ft). We recommend reviewing eligibility with VTrans prior to application submittal.

Following is a list of the eligible applicants for TAP projects:

- a local government
- a regional transportation authority
- a transit agency
- a natural resource or public lands agency
- a school district, local education agency, or school
- a tribal government
- any other local or regional governmental entity with responsibility for oversight of transportation or recreational trails that the State determines to be eligible, consistent with the goals of the legislation. To date, the only eligible entities that the State, in consultation with FHWA, has determined to be eligible entities are regional planning commissions.

The Transportation Alternatives Program provides funds to either develop scoping (feasibility) studies or to develop projects that lead to construction. All projects must demonstrate a strong transportation link. There is a required sponsor funding match of 20% for construction projects and 50% for scoping studies. Applicants may only apply for up to \$300,000 in federal funds (including salt/sand shed applications, which is a change from previous years) for a total project cost of \$375,000. Scoping studies are typically in the \$15,000 to \$25,000 range of federal funding (\$30,000 to \$50,000 total). Successful applicants may propose that up to one-half of their required match be met by donated goods and services but this will be subject to approval during the project development process.

This is not a block grant program but rather a reimbursement program. Successful applicants will be expected to commit to progressing the project expeditiously and enter into a grant agreement with VTrans that will lay out respective responsibilities. A requirement to maintain the project after completion will be included. All projects must be developed in accordance with applicable federal and state rules and regulations, per the *Municipal Assistance Bureau Guidebook for Locally Managed Projects* which can be found at: <http://vtransengineering.vermont.gov/bureaus/mab/local-projects/general/guidebook>

Letters of Intent to submit an application will not be required. Pre-application training workshops will be provided to potential applicants. It is strongly recommended that an official representative of the applicant attend one of these workshops. This year, the workshop sessions will be provided as webinars and attendees will **log-on to vtrans.webex.com**. No pre-registration or password is required, and the presentations will begin promptly at the designated times. The two sessions are scheduled for Tuesday, September 1 from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM and Wednesday, September 2<sup>nd</sup> from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. You can participate in the training from any computer connected to the internet.

For a copy of the VTrans Transportation Alternatives Program Guide and Application, visit the website: <http://vtransengineering.vermont.gov/bureaus/mab/local-projects/transportation-alternatives>. You may also obtain an application, or ask any questions about the program or application process by contacting me by phone at (802) 828-5799 or by email at [scott.robertson@vermont.gov](mailto:scott.robertson@vermont.gov).

This year, it is preferred to submit applications in electronic format as Adobe.pdf files which can be e-mailed to me directly at [Scott.robertson@vermont.gov](mailto:Scott.robertson@vermont.gov). Hard copy applications will still be accepted by mailing to the address below:

Scott Robertson, Transportation Alternatives Coordinator  
Vermont Agency of Transportation-Municipal Assistance Bureau  
One National Life Drive – 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Montpelier, Vermont 05633-5001

Application are **due in-hand or by e-mail by 1:00pm on Friday, October 16th, 2015**. If applications are submitted in hardcopy form, sixteen (16) copies of final and complete applications are required.

I strongly urge you to work with your Regional Planning Commission. These organizations are invaluable resources and can help you refine your project. The Vermont Agency of Transportation is committed to this program and working with applicants to complete successful projects. We look forward to working with you.